

FIRST COVENANT LAMPLIGHTER

**Volume XLVII - Number 9
September 2023**

Choosing a Good Minister

One of the toughest tasks a church faces is choosing a good minister. A member of an official board undergoing this painful process finally lost patience. He'd just witnessed the pastoral search committee reject applicant after applicant for some minor fault, real or imagined. It was time for a bit of soul-searching on the part of the committee. So he stood up and read this letter purported to be from an applicant:

"Gentlemen: Understanding your pulpit is vacant, I should like to apply for this position. I have many qualifications. I've been a preacher with much success and also have had some successes as a writer. Some say I'm a good organizer. I've been a leader in most places where I've been.

"I'm over 50 years of age and have never preached in one place for more than three years. In some places I have left town after my work caused riots and disturbances. I must admit I have been in jail three or four times, but not because of any real wrongdoing.

"My health is not too good, though I still accomplish a great deal. The churches I have preached in have been small though located in large cities.

"I've not gotten along well with religious leaders in towns where I have preached. In fact, some have threatened me and even attacked me physically.

I am not too good at keeping records. I have been known to forget whom I have baptized,

First Covenant Church

Virginia, Minnesota

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"However, if you can use me, I promise to do my best for you."

The board member turned to the committee and said, "Well, what do you think? Shall we call him?"

The good church folks were appalled! Consider a sickly, troublemaking, absent-minded ex-jailbird? Was the board member crazy? Who signed the application? Who had such colossal nerve?

The board member eyed them all keenly before he replied. "It's signed 'The Apostle Paul'."

—From "Dear Abby"

FIRST COVENANT CHURCH

PURPOSE STATEMENT

**The mission of First Covenant Church is to worship God,
equip people to live in faith,
share God's love,
and serve the community around us.**

SERVING CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

Ushers:

Sept. 10—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen

Sept 17—Bob & Mary Nelson

Sept. 24—Shirley Koski

Oct. 1—Mike & Kath Hannay

Caretakers for the week of . . .

Sept. 3—Roger & Gail Johnston

Sept 10—Wayne & Bernie Christiansen

Sept. 17—Ken & Linda Pogorelec

Sept. 24—Shirley Koski & Barb Knapper

FINANCIAL REPORT

7/1-23-7/31/23

Balance on hand 7/1: **\$43,242.35**

General fund income: **\$6,045.00**

Other income: \$388.50

Expenses: **\$2,897.57**

Balance on hand 7/31: **\$46,709.78**

COVENANT WOMEN MINISTRIES

Women's Fall Retreat is coming soon. This year's theme is "Stay—an invitation to slow down, take a seat and experience His sanctifying work in us when we choose to stay". The speaker is Marylou MacLines from Salem Covenant. Dates are September 15-17. Register through Covenant Park website or look for brochures at church.

Project Day will begin again on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. We have lap robes to tie and plenty to sew. Join us Tuesday, September 19.

BAR MIKTZVAH

You are invited to a Bar Mitzvah for Baruch Haba B'Shem Adonia Triestman at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 9th at Virginia Bible Chapel, 600 S. 7th Ave. W.. Supper will follow. Please RSVP to Daniel at 218-780-2359 or to Priscilla at 218-780-4692.

COVENANT KIDS CONGO

Providing families with direct nutritional needs is often the jumpstart they need to provide for their family long into the future. In our program in Gemena, we have seen significant progress in improving the nutritional status of children.

Stunting is identified when a child's height-for-age is more than two standard deviations below the WHO Child Growth Standards median. Last year, evaluations indicated a 33% decrease in stunting in children under five since 2018. One significant factor was the involvement of households in savings groups and income-generating activities. This increased families' earnings and enabled them to invest in their family's nutritional health. Praise God!

World Vision's economic empowerment efforts are making big changes for families in Gemena and Karawa; however, nine in 10 parents report they

still struggle to provide for their children. Many of these families have requested access to additional credit. Join us in praying for the capacity to fulfill their desire to create and grow income-generating enterprises.



Our mission is to catalyze the holistic growth of healthy families and communities in places of deep poverty. Working together with partners in Africa and elsewhere, we invest in local efforts in medical and economic development.

Economic growth is key to changed lives. We are involved with several long-term, generational initiatives in infrastructure and agriculture, such as electricity, bridge repairs, good agricultural practices, and building capacity.

People in DR Congo know that investing in repairing bridges and roads can make a significant economic impact for their communities, as well as provide access to schools, hospitals, and water sources.

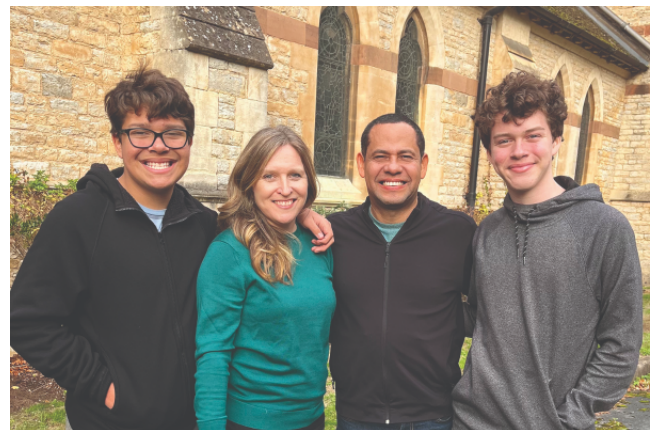
When bridges are in poor condition, they threaten physical safety and economic security. Accidents cause the loss of thousands of dollars worth of goods, and even loss of life. Farmers can't get their goods to market, walking over a log bridge to a hospital or clinic is dangerous, carrying food, water, and heavy materials is risky, and children can't easily get to school.

Through our partners, many bridges have been repaired in the area. But there are many more problematic and dangerous bridges that desperately need placing or repairing.

UPDATES FROM OUR COVENANT MISSIONARIES

The past 2 weeks were full! They were full in the sense that the schedule was intense and required a lot of logistical planning, as well as for the fact that we were with people non-stop. They were also full in the sense that we experienced rich community, learning, sharing across cultures, and mutual encouragement.

We participated in a weekend-long conference with over 100 participants from Latin America that focused on the legacy of Caty and Rene Padilla and their contribution to Integral Mission. The event was organized by CETI (a theological school out of Costa Rica that is virtual with students across Latin America) and Julio was part of the logistical team, helping with transportation and other details. We met together with participants from over 20 nations (including indigenous nations that were present) from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. The panel discussions, small group conversations, and personal reflection time revolved around the theme of the Integral Mission, which understands proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel to touch every aspect of human life including family, profession, church and society. There was so much to take in and process. The stories of the participants were inspiring as they are living this out in their communities. —Julio & Katie Isazas (Colombia)



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY

14th

Shirley Koski

AMONG US

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of **Doreen (Fleetwood) Wallace**, who died of cancer at the age of 71 on July 29th. Doreen grew up in our church and was confirmed in our church. Her memorial service was held at the Vineyard Church in Duluth on August 25th.

Eldora Martin, who with her husband, George, attended our church during summers when they were at their lake home on Ely Lake, died at age 97 on August 11th in Albertville, Minnesota. Her memorial service was held in St. Michael, Minnesota, on August 19th. Eldora was a sister of Eleanor Lahti, who with her husband, Alfred, was a longtime member of our church before their move to Mankato.

Jennifer, Elizabeth, Soren, and Laila visited with Wayne & Bernie at the beginning of August. Soren and Laila are high school juniors in Reno, Nevada.

BULLETIN, CALENDAR,

AND NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Items for the October calendar need to be e-mailed to pogy56@gmail.com by Sunday, September 17th. Weekly bulletin items should be e-mailed to wbchris@q.com by the Wednesday before they are to appear.

Items for the October issue of the **Lamplighter** should be turned in by Sunday, September 17th. Items may be submitted by e-mail to wbchris@q.com. Remember that we are always looking for news of interest for the "Among Us" column

